



Veterans' Affairs Committee
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Veterans' Affairs Committee

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Veterans' Affairs Committee was called to order by C.M Stevens, Chairperson, on Wednesday, December 10, 2008 at 7:00 p.m., in the Mayor and Council Chambers, City Hall, 255 W. Alameda St., Tucson, Arizona.

1. Call to Order/Establish a Quorum

Members Present:

Ernest Minchella
William Stein
Roger Smith
Norman Ross
J.L. "Pepe" Mendoza
Herbert Rogers
Saul Stoltz
C. Martin Stevens, Chairperson
E. Wendell Hague
Paul R. Hetrick

Representing:

American Legion Post #36
DAV Auxiliary Cactus #2
DAV Cactus Chapter #2
Korean War Veterans' Association
So. AZ. VA Health Care System
Spanish Trail Chapter NCOA
Tucson Jewish War Veterans Post 201
Veteran's Employment & Training
VFW Post #549
Vietnam Veterans of America, CH. 106

Members Absent:

Abel Moreno

Representing:

American Legion Post #7

Others Present:

Chris Swenson
Cathie Starr

Representing:

Military Lounge Liaison
Arizona Department of Veterans Services

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Wendell Hague.

3. Invocation

The invocation was given by Paul Hetrick.

4. Introduction of Guests

Cathi Starr was introduced. It was her second visit and the committee looked forward to receiving a letter from her organization asking the committee to approve her for membership.

5. Approval of New Members

There were no new members to consider.

6. Chairman's Report on Current Events

Mr. Stevens spoke about Colonel Joey Strickland, the new director of the Arizona Department of Veterans Services and how the veterans' community looked forward to working with him.

7. Approval of Minutes – Reconsideration of September 10, 2008 for attendance corrections and November 12, 2008

It was moved, duly seconded and passed by a voice vote of 10 to 0 (Abel Moreno absent) to approve the September 10, 2008 minutes and the November 12, 2008 minutes as presented.

8. Discussion / Action regarding the effort to bring a National Veterans Cemetery to the Tucson area

Members stated their representative organizations were fully behind bringing a National Veterans Cemetery to the Tucson Area. They expressed elation at having Colonel Strickland's support as he had previous experience with Veterans' Cemeteries in Louisiana.

9. Discussion / Action for Operation Exodus 2008

Operation Exodus was planned for Friday, December 19 and Saturday, December 20, 2008 when the greatest number of service personnel would be passing through Tucson International Airport. Committee members were planning to be present to pass out snack bags on Friday, December 19, 2008. Volunteers from the Southern Arizona Veterans Health Care System would be on hand for Saturday, December 20, 2008. Members of the Jewish War Veterans also volunteered to be at the Military Lounge on Christmas Day. Items for the snack bags would be purchased on December 15, 2008 and the bags assembled on Wednesday, December 17, 2008 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #549.

It was moved, duly seconded and passed by a vote of 10 to 0 (Abel Moreno absent) to expend funds to purchase the items needed for two thousand Operation Exodus bags and to leave any unused snacks for returning soldiers on January 4, 5 and 6, 2009.

10. Committee Reports – Discussion/Action

a. Airport Military Lounge

Christina Swenson, the Airport Military Lounge liaison to Fort Huachuca, reported the area was ready for the volunteers' arrival for Operation Exodus.

b. Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Cathi Starr, a benefits counselor for the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services for all of Southern Arizona, said they planned to do more outreach to their outlying offices and to communities at large to help Veterans with their claims.

c. VA Hospital

Pepe Mendoza spoke on the "Welcome Home" event held at Tucson Electric Park on Monday, November 15, 2008. The keynote speaker was Dr. Carmona. Media was in attendance and coverage was very positive in the newspapers, on TV and on radio. Mr. Mendoza also passed out informational flyers.

d. Arizona DES Employment Administration Veterans' Employment Services

Marty Stevens reported the Department of Economic Services was working on a computer program that would allow him to print out a monthly total of veterans served in Southern Arizona to share with the committee.

e. Financial Report

Wendell Hague, Treasurer, presented three reports; the committee's expenditures, break down of donations, and cash flow. The year-end report would be presented at the January meeting.

It was moved, duly seconded and passed by a vote of 10 to 0 (Abel Moreno absent) to accept the reports as presented.

11. Future Agenda Items

- Discussion/Action regarding the Four Chaplains Ceremony.
- Discussion/Action regarding mental health services at Southern Arizona Veterans Health Care.
- Discussion/action regarding possible change to Committee By-laws.

12. Annual Nomination and Election of Committee Officers

It was moved, duly seconded and carried by a vote of 10 to 0 (Abel Moreno absent) to re-elect the current officers: C.M. Stevens as Chairperson, Norman Ross as Senior Vice-Chair, Pepe Mendoza as Junior Vice-Chair, and Wendell Hague as Treasurer.

13. Salute to Colors

The Salute to Colors was led by Norman Ross.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.